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GERMAN LITERATURE.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—Searching reviews of several school editions of French and German texts have recently appeared in MOD. LANG. NOTES. They should have exercised a salutary and restraining influence, but it still seems necessary to call attention to glaring and at times ludicrous mistakes. An abridged edition of Freytag's *Soll und Haben* has lately been published,¹ the notes of which, to say the least, suggest the propriety of reminding editors of German texts whose mother-tongue German is not of the fact that there are dictionaries that might be consulted profitably in the translation of German terms.

I call attention to some of the mistakes found in the editor's notes:

P. 45, 1 "*abgefeimteste*, most accursed;" even small dictionaries give the correct meanings *crafty*, *astute*, *arch*-. As to the etymology of the word advanced by the editor, its connection with *Fehme*, I need not say anything.

P. 99, 2 "*Mausche*, translate here, *the miserable Jew*. The word originally meaning Moses is here, as frequently, used in a derogatory sense;" here certainly not, it is simply the form in which the name Moses appears in later Jewish pronunciation, the term used in contempt being *Mauschel*, not *Mausche*.

P. 103, 3 "*der Rosskamm*, proper name (*der* is familiar)." Even Feller's dictionary gives the correct meaning of the term, not to speak of Kluge where the explanation may be found.

P. 159, 2 "*der vornehme Braune soll heute merken, was ein Kommisschenkel durchsetzen kann*, this proud bay shall find out to-day what the shinbones of a clerk are good for. Said in humorous depreciation of himself, since he was trained for business, not for soldiering." It seems that the editor is familiar neither with the fact that Carl Sturm has served in the cavalry (cf. note 132, 2), nor with the fact that the word *Kommiss* (not *Kommis*) has reference to the army, as in *Kommissbrot*, etc., not to any clerical duty. The meaning of the passage is, therefore, about the opposite of the one given by the editor, namely, that Carl does not 'depreciate' himself, but expects to put 'the proud bay' to a most severe test.

¹ *Soll und Haben* von Gustav Freytag. Abridged and edited with introduction and notes by George T. Files, Ph.D. Boston, D. C. Heath & Co., 1901.

P. 182, 2 "*eines Herrn Bratzky*, of a Herr Bratzky. One of the corrupt noblemen of the neighborhood who made Anton's early days on the Polish estate troublesome and dangerous." Apparently, the editor has forgotten what position Mr. Bratzky had formerly occupied on the estate, and does not seem to feel the force of *eines* in this passage.

Further, why is *Hanswurst* always translated by 'clumsy fool'? Is a *Herbergswater* necessarily 'an old innkeeper,' or a *Kaufstücker* 'an eager purchaser'?

A curious misunderstanding of the social and political conditions of Germany has led the editor, in the Introduction, to use the expression "the middle or merchant classes" about synonymously with "the common people," "the working classes," "the working people," as a consequence of which the conservative Liberal Freytag comes near being a Social-Democrat, and the *Grenzboten* the organ of the Social-Democratic party.

It is needless to extend the list of errors; they make it apparent that the notes have not been written with such care as should have been exercised in the preparation of a school book; they suggest the query—and herein lies the object of this note,—is the work of modern language instruction in any way furthered by the multiplication of poor editions of excellent reading material, as illustrated by the book under consideration?

ERNST H. MENSEL.

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BRIEF MENTION.

The next annual meeting of the Modern Language Association of America will be held at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md., on December 29, 30, 31, 1902. The Central Division will meet in Chicago, Ill., on January 1, 2, 3, 1903.

PERSONAL.

Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, formerly of the Louisiana State University, has assumed charge of the department of the English language in the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C. He is succeeded in Louisiana by Dr. W. A. Read, of the University of Arkansas.